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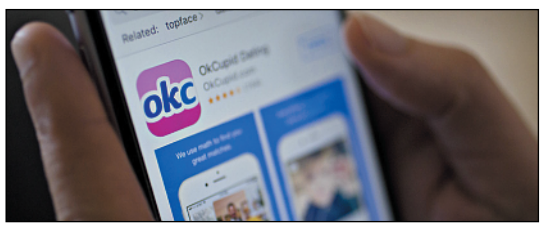

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The newspaper of Silicon Valley

The Mercury News

BayArea NewsGroup 111 Volume 169, issue 226 FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020 24/7 COVERAGE: MERCURYNEWS.COM » $1.50

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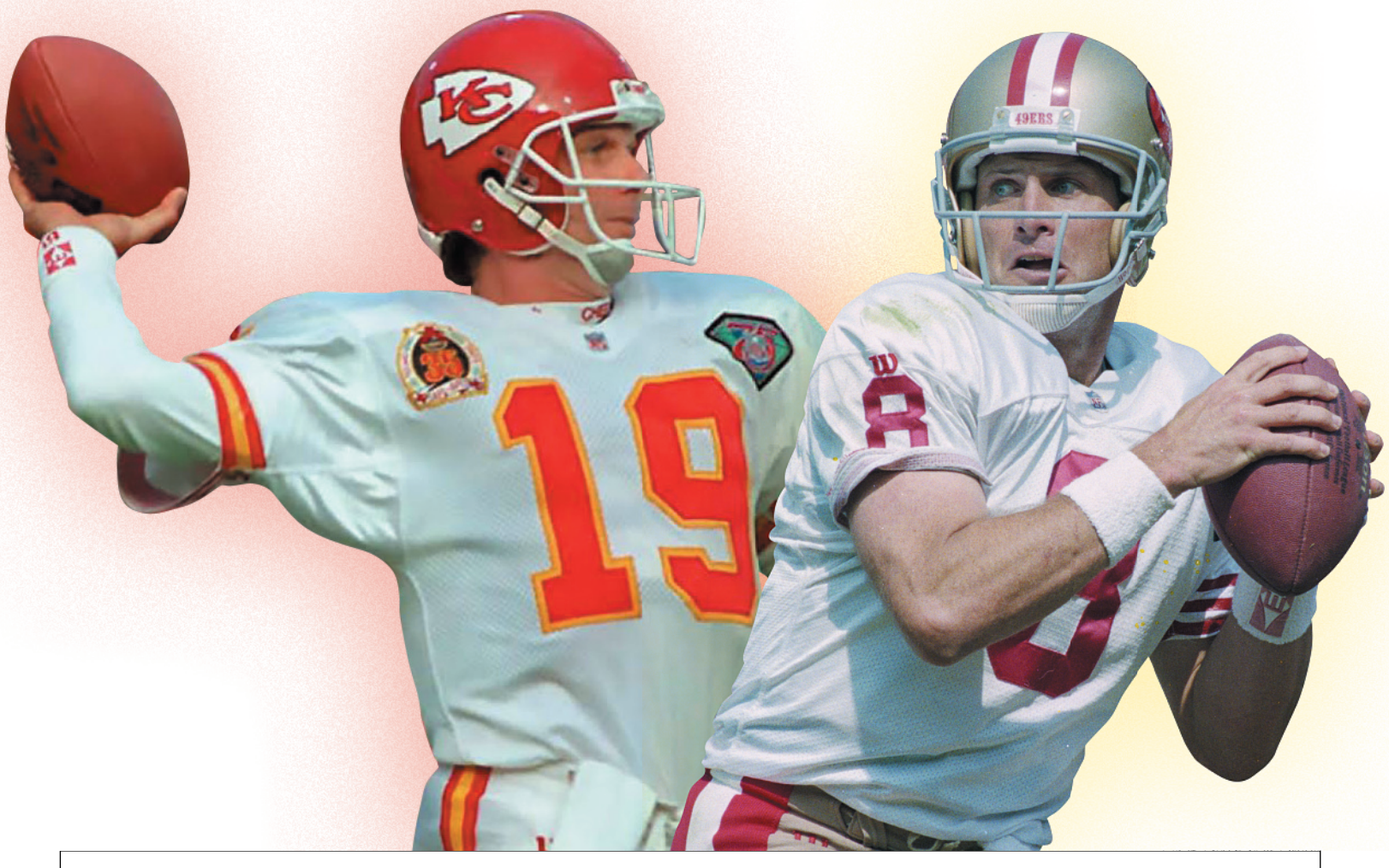
Matchup: San Francisco 49ers (15-3) vs. Kansas City Chiefs (14-4)



JOE VS. STEVE

Montana won four Super Bowls with 49ers, lost starting position to Young, OK'd trade to Chiefs — then they met as opponents

By Gary Peterson
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Sunday's Super Bowl will be the most important game between the 49ers and the Chiefs, but it would take a lot for it to become the most dramatic. That title belongs to the Joe vs. Steve Bowl and the day 49ers legend Joe Montana played his first and only game against his old team.

The visual was a shocker that September day in Kansas City: Montana wearing a red Chiefs helmet bearing an arrowhead as he warmed up across the field from the 49ers and their quarterback, Steve Young.

Young appeared deferential as he trotted across the field to greet his former teammate and rival. Montana — the man who had waved the white flag in the long-stirring battle for 49ers quarterback supremacy a year earlier — appeared unmoved.

The whole vibe at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium was bizarre on Sept. 11, 1994, as if the time-space continuum had gone sideways.

This was a grudge match in every sense of the word. Montana, 37, who had won four Super Bowl titles for the 49ers, including three Super Bowl MVPs, was in his second season with the Chiefs.

Young was in his fifth season as Montana's successor in San Francisco — a controversial, fan base-splitting decision that had created reality-TV worthy drama within the 49ers locker room. It also had made both otherworldly talented grown

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MORE COVERAGE

In Sports: Who are the unsung heroes who've helped the 49ers reach the Super Bowl? PAGE C1

In Business: Super Bowl ads reflect what people want to drink — fizz, low carbs. PAGE C7

Inside: Special 12-page Super Bowl preview section. PAGE S1

LOW INVENTORY

Bay Area home prices regaining some speed

Zillow finds first regional increases since April

By Louis Hansen
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After a monthslong slump in Bay Area home prices, the market appears poised to drive higher as buyers act on low interest rates and fight for scarce inventory.

The median sale price for a single-family home in the nine-county Bay Area edged up 1.5% in December over the previous year, the first upswing since April, according to Zillow.

Agents and economists expect a market rebound — and December's $871,500 median price could be the start of another streak. "This area has been the go-to example of where the market overheated," Zillow economist Jeff Tucker said. "It went through a pretty major correction."

HOMES » PAGE 8

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF PRESIDENT TRUMP

JULIO CORTEZ — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACQUELYN MARTIN — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, left, and Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., right, are two of the key senators in a bid for witnesses in the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump.

Key GOP senator, Alexander, says he'll vote no on witnesses

By Lisa Mascaro, Eric Tucker and Zeke Miller
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said late Thursday she would vote to allow witnesses in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, building momentum for the Democrats' effort to hear more testimony and increasing the possibility of a drawn-out trial the White House hoped to avoid.

But Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee said in a statement there was "no need for more evidence," giving the Trump team the possibility of a deciding vote in their direction.

Collins, a centrist senator, announced her decision after the Senate concluded a long question-and-answer session with the House Democrats prosecuting the charges and Trump's lawyers defending him.

Alexander released his statement moments later.

A vote on the witness question, expected today, could lead to an abrupt end of the trial with Trump's expected acquittal. Or it could bring days, if not weeks more argu-

TRIAL » PAGE 9

STATE WATER SUPPLY

Snowpack declining after dry January

Sierra below average, but still time for winter storms

By Paul Rogers
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All that sunny, dry weather in January is beginning to take a toll on California's water supply.

As of Thursday, the statewide Sierra Nevada snowpack — a major source of water for cities and farms across the state — stood at 72% of its historical average for that date, down from 90% a month ago.

While concerning, experts say it's no time to panic and not a sign that the state is necessarily headed toward a drought. California still has two more months of winter weather ahead. And many of the state's biggest reservoirs are currently at or near their historical averages due to

SNOWPACK » PAGE 8

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